

London, 28 Sept 1840

My dear Bruce,

I have ^{been} anxious to put into your hands
(as indeed I have been strongly requested to do) the inclosed proof
of a prospectus of the Shakespeare Society (I dare not fill up
the intermediate letters) of which you have already heard something
from me, thro' good Master Secretary Thorns. I was in doubt
where to find or to write to you, till this morning, when he informed
me you were still at Ramsgate, & likely to remain there some days
longer. I therefore now discharge the duty entrusted to me of
begging you to join our Council. When I became a Recruit
(Collier being Sergeant Kite) it had been determined;
or more properly speaking, proposed & agreed to, that
the Council should consist of fifteen members, the
Camden number, & the vacancies which then remained had been kept
open for others who have since joined, viz. Madden, Courtenay,
Maeready, & Talford. But on further consideration ^{it was thought} it would be
advisable to increase our numbers to twenty, & the five proposed were
yourself, Sheridan Knowles, Planche, Hunter, & Charles Young of
historical fame. The two latter I have just secured. Collier has
written to Knowles & Planche, but has not yet received their answer, &
he deputed me to urge you to give us your valuable assistance, ^{if} which
he is particularly desirous that we should if possible avail ourselves. Do
pray join us. There are some names in the list hardly known to me,
nor perhaps to you, but they were the Projectors of the scheme, & I suspect
could not have been enabled to carry it into effect, if they had not called in
Collier's assistance to complete the ~~first~~ Cabinet, in which, though I can

hardly hope for such a consummation, I should rejoice to see you First
Lord of the Treasury, or rather with undivided sway, at once
Lord Treasurer Burleigh. Let me entreat you however to become
a councillor, ^{at least} in which character your judgment & circumspection
will not fail to benefit us incalculably. If you could conveniently
send me a prompt answer by return of post, it would be very desirable.

John Bruce Esq

5, High Street,

Ramsgate.

and I must also beg you will return the proof, I have no other & shall not
have one left. Don't faint at the sight of the Printer's Orthography!
Maddox (whose answer I have received this morning from Leamington) bears it
wonderful philosophy. You & he will have voices in the Council on the
question, & may make you stand upon it, if you think proper, & I will ensure
you at least fair play. ~~Send~~ I write this very hastily at the Athenaeum but pray
direct your answer to James St. I hope you are getting strong in spite of rain & wind.
Ever most truly
Thomas Ansell.